

# THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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Beginning in this issue —

## The Little Pine Peddler by May Justus

### Chapter One

JOHNNY McASHER lived with his mammy at the end of Tumble-Down Hollow, and their log-cabin home was the least little house in the shadow of Big Log Mountain. One room it had, with a small front porch where they liked to sit in summer. Though the house was so tiny, it was big enough for the two who lived in it, and they thought it quite good enough for them. Or at least, that is the way that they felt most of the time. Sometimes, when it rained through a hole in the roof, they wished for a better shelter, but as there seemed no way of getting one, they never complained about it.

One night it was raining very hard, and down it came—drip, drip, drip, into Johnny McAsher's face. He dreamed that he was washing his face before setting off for school, and turned over in his pallet bed without waking up. Drip, drip, drip, the rain kept coming down, and Johnny McAsher dreamed that he was running from a shower. He turned himself over once again, and this time he woke up. He looked up suddenly at the hole in the roof, and the rain washed the sleep from his eyes. He felt his hair and found it wet. His bed was all wet, too. He thought of calling his mammy who was asleep in the corner, but he hated to wake her up. He decided to wrap a quilt about him and sleep out on the floor.

The next thing he knew it was morning, and a pine-knot fire was roaring in the room.

"Jump up in a hurry, and come to the fire," his mammy said to him. "I am so afraid you will catch cold from sleeping on the floor. I will hang your clothes by the fire to dry while you eat breakfast, and while you wait you had better have a bed quilt wrapped around you."

Johnny needed no second bidding to get him up this morning. He felt as damp as his clothing looked and the pine-knot fire was comforting. How good it seemed to sit on the hearth and hold out his hands to the flames. Some gruel was cooking on the coals, and he sniffed it greedily.

He had to eat his breakfast in his bed-blanket suit, but he didn't mind that at all. He played that he was an Indian chief sitting in his wigwam. Johnny McAsher had a way of playing to suit himself. At school he was always making up games that the children liked to play. "Johnny

Make-Up," was the name that he earned this way for himself.

After breakfast, his mammy gave him the clothes that she had dried, but alas! his coat was still as wet as though it had been in the wash. The steam was still going up from it like vapor from a tea-kettle.

"It is cold this morning," his mammy said, "and you can't go to school without it. I suppose you will have to stay at home, though I don't like to have you do it."

Johnny's face wrinkled in a worried look, and he swallowed very hard. "I have not missed a day in school this year," he said with a little gulp.

His mammy saw the look on his face, and she was sorry for him. But what in the world was she to do, she asked herself. Johnny had no other coat, and he couldn't go out in a bed quilt! Then she remembered her old gray shawl that she kept for meeting days. It was very thick and very warm, and it would do for a coat.

Now, Johnny McAsher knew very well that boys don't wear shawls, and he didn't want to go to school in one and have the children ask questions. But he knew that this was the only wrap that



"He looked up suddenly at the hole in the roof, and the rain washed the sleep from his eyes."



his mammy could find for him, and he let her put it around him and tie it about his neck.

"I'll just play Indian all day, Mammy," he told her brightly. "I'll play that I'm an Indian brave and the other children will play, too."

As he set off down the Hollow the sun rose over the mountain. It warmed the early morning air and lifted the mist from the lowlands. Johnny began to sing and skip to make his bare feet nimble, and he sang so loud that he did not hear the wagon coming behind him.

"Hey, there! Hey, there!" somebody called, and he jumped and looked in a hurry. It was Uncle Zebbie Holloway driving his old ox wagon.

"Want a ride to school, youngun?" the old man asked him kindly. "Jump in then, jump in right now, or these critters might run away with us."

Johnny laughed, for he understood that the last part of this was a joke. "As slow as Uncle Zebbie's oxen" was a proverb in the Hollow. But he accepted the invitation to ride, and clambered into the wagon.

"Sort o' cool mornin'," said Uncle Zebbie, by way of conversation. "I notice you're well fixed up for it, though," he added, as he looked at the shawl.

Now Johnny McAsher knew Uncle Zebbie very well, and he didn't mind telling him the circumstances. So he told him about the hole in the roof and how the rain poured in.

"Well, I declare!" the old man cried, "that's just too bad to think about. And what in the world are you going to do when it gets to be real cold weather?"

"Last winter," Johnny told him, "I slept on a feather bed and underneath one, too. And when it snowed in the night time, the top feather bed was white. Mammy would shake it off next morning and we would sweep the floor."

"Somebody ought to fix that hole," said the old man thoughtfully. "I'll come myself and do it the very first chance I get. Just now I'm awfully busy hauling wood to sell. The folks away down in the valley are buying their winter's wood."

"I've never been to the valley," said Johnny longingly. "I would give anything to go down there and see the big town stores."

"It's a mighty fine place," said Uncle Zebbie. "You ought to see the sights. The houses they have down there are not at all like ours. They are not built of logs, but are framed of wood and brick. And they have windows in them, just like your school. The stores are five times bigger than the one in the Hollow. And you can walk along the streets and see the things inside."

"Oh," said Johnny McAsher longingly, "if I could go just once!"

The old man chuckled and nodded. "Of course you can go," he said. "You



*"How good it seemed to sit on the hearth and hold out his hands to the flames."*

can just go along with me and help me sell my wood. I need a boy about like you to help me anyway."

Johnny was so excited that he almost jumped out of the wagon. "When—when—when are you going again?" he managed at last to say.

"Not any more after this time until next Saturday," said Uncle Zebbie. "Now I'll tell you something Johnny, that you can do. After school is out each day you help me gather pine knots. And when you go to town with me you will have some to sell, too. People down in the valley like knots to kindle fires. They pay a dime or more for two or three. That is a very good way for you to make yourself some money, and you will be needing a pair of shoes some of these frosty mornings."

So much good luck coming all at once took Johnny's breath away, and he came very near to riding past the schoolhouse. It was Uncle Zebbie who reminded him that he had to get out at the creek.

"I'll be with you this afternoon," he called to the old man, as the wagon rumbled away.

He was so full of his great good luck that he quite forgot the shawl, and if the children wondered about it, they never said anything. He wore it up to the spelling class and on until recess, and then he remembered that he had it on, and they all played Indian. The boys let him be Indian Chief, and then they took their turn. Every boy in school wanted to wear the old gray shawl and be an Indian Chief, too.

*(To be continued.)*

"What is your new dog?" inquired the kind neighbor of four-year-old John, who had recently acquired a puppy of bulldog and wire-haired terrier combination. "Oh," said Johnny, who is devoted to his Sunday-school, "he is half bull and half Unitarian."—*Christian Register.*

## The Nut Tree

By CHARLOTTE NEWCOMB PARKER

A nut tree is growing right in our yard! Though climbing it is rather hard, We scramble quickly to the top And then . . . the nuts begin to drop! The others catch them as they land And they just think it's simply grand If we will let them stay below And watch the nuts come dropping so. The meats are awfully good and sweet, Just what we children like to eat. But we'll put most of them away To have some stormy winter day. We'll go down stairs and get the sack, The hammer will go "crack, crack, crack!" Then hard black shells will open wide, And we'll find ripe brown nuts inside. Dear boys and girls, we wish that you . . .

Could have a nice old nut tree, too!

## The Burro Who Would Never—

By C. M. B.

TWO young burros stood on a high ridge in a mountainous region of the Southwest. They were looking far down the rocky, sparsely-timbered slope to where some Mexicans were loading their animals with the wood they had been cutting. They piled the sticks of ash and juniper on to the wooden pack-saddles until the little burros appeared almost hidden beneath their burdens.

The two burros above had never felt halter nor saddle. Like many others in that region, they had been born and had grown up on the wild and lonely mountains, and knew no more of human kind than they saw from afar, or heard from animals turned out to graze in the summer.

"Why do those fellows stand there and let men load them so?" said the younger, scornfully. "Do you think I'd ever allow such a thing to be done to me!"

"Perhaps they talked just that way before they were broken!" said the other.

"Broken! I'd like to see any one catch and break me!" snorted the first, and, furious at the thought, he shook himself, bared his teeth and stamped the rocks with his small hoofs. "Never!" he went on, "never would I be a *gentled* burro, and let men shut me up and feed me and put things about my head and on my back, and ride me!"

"Still, some of us are always getting taken up and branded—" began the elder.

"But I, never! Never! Every other wild burro in these hills, perhaps, but never this one!" and, with a flirt of his heels, he dashed up the slope, as if even the thought of pursuit alarmed him.

The fine sunny days and clear cold nights of autumn and early winter passed, and the young burro, whom we may call Chiquito, roamed and fed on



the hills and up and down the canyons. He happened to be resting near the mouth of a small steep canyon one night when the weather changed very suddenly, and the snow began falling heavily. All the next day it continued, and when it ceased falling, it lay so deep and soft on the ground that the animals wintering out were not able to get at their food, nor to move about without great exhaustion. Not for many years had such a snowfall been seen in that section.

Chiquito floundered miserably about for the next two days, gradually moving down into a larger canyon into which the small one opened. Although the snow was beginning to melt, it still covered deeply all his usual food, and he was forced to browse on a few dead leaves that still clung to some low trees.

Staggering with weakness, he found himself near dusk one evening at the back of a big ranch yard. The snow had been well tramped down inside, and horses and cattle were at their evening feed. The starving burro edged closer, step by step, forgetting his fears in his craving for the good food. The gate was open, and not far within stood a mouse-colored burro, eating hay. Oh, how good it looked! Chiquito was unable to resist his longing for a bite. He had almost reached the rack when he caught sight of a boy standing on the other side of the grey burro. Before he could turn to fly, the boy was walking swiftly away from him, leading his burro by the halter. In another moment the famished Chiquito was munching the hay. When he had finished the small portion in the rack, he

looked around. The boy was standing a little way behind him, looking at him with a smile, one arm thrown over the neck of his own burro. And the gate was closed!

That night, in a warm stall, with hay in his manger and straw for his bed, Chiquito, by turns, ate and stopped to stamp and kick and bray. At last, Paz, the grey burro, who was in the next stall, said,

"Quiet down, old chap, and go to sleep. You don't know when you're well off! There's going to be a lot of dead cattle out on the hills when this snow is gone, and I shouldn't wonder if there'd be some dead burros out there, too. Did you really want to be one of them?"

"But I always said I'd never be caught and broken!" raged Chiquito. "I've vowed they'd never get me!"

"I don't know that it's a good plan to vow things so hard," said Paz. "One's so apt to be mistaken, and when one is, it's all the harder for remembering all that vowing. And sometimes the thing you've made such a fuss about turns out not so bad after all! Suppose you try to forget that you weren't ever going to be a *gentled* burro, and make the best of the matter! That boy, Dick, isn't a bad master; he'll ride you hard, but he'll never let your back get sore, and he'll feed you!—my! how he'll feed you!"

"I said I'd never,—*never*—" began Chiquito again, in a woeful bray.

"O forget what you said, and go to sleep!" said Paz, lying down in his straw with a thump. "Next time don't say so much that you don't know!"

## Polly Parrot

By Frances B. Curtin

FOR the past four years Polly Parrot has been one of my nearest neighbors and although I have always tried to treat him in a neighborly fashion he still views me with suspicion.

Before coming to Canada, Polly had lived for a number of years in Los Angeles. During his residence there he formed the habit of having toast and coffee for breakfast. About eight o'clock every morning he shouts, "Toast! Coffee!" He likes his coffee quite warm and his toast very crisp. If the latter is not of the desired crispness he will push it disdainfully aside, and then he will gaze at you for fully ten seconds without winking. His cold steady stare usually has the desired effect. When more toast is brought he tests it, and if it is satisfactory he breaks off small pieces, dips them in the coffee until they are well soaked, then swallows them.

Between meals Polly likes to chew at a couple of pebbles. Up until recently his chief pastime was chewing up spools. Holding the spool in one foot he would

nibble away until the floor of his cage was covered with little broken pieces of wood almost as fine as sawdust.

One day I gave him a large crochet-cotton spool. It was of extremely hard wood, and to add to Polly's difficulties, it was of a very awkward shape. Polly held it in one foot, then in the other. It slipped from his grasp again and again. Finally he pushed it into one corner of the cage and, holding it with both feet, tried to nibble off the edges. But the wood was too hard and in his anxiety to break off just a little sliver, he forgot to brace his feet, and away rolled the spool across the cage. He tried again and again, but at last, weary and discouraged, he climbed up on his perch and hung his head in a most dejected manner. He seemed to take his defeat much to heart. He refused to eat his supper and growled angrily when we came near his cage. Yet when we attempted to remove the spool he flew into a great rage and refused to let us touch it.

Next morning we were awakened by shrill cries of "Coffee! Coffee!" Thinking that Polly was very hungry we brought his coffee earlier than usual. Coming back a little later to remove the coffee jug, we found Polly in a great state of excitement. Coffee was splashing in all directions as he frantically swirled the spool round and round in his coffee jug. Every few minutes he would lift the spool out and try to bite a piece off, but, failing, he would swirl it again. At last, seeing that his efforts were all in vain, he threw aside the coffee-soaked spool and climbed up on his perch. Here he sulked all day long till supper time.

As soon as we sat down to supper we heard shouts of "Hello there!" (This is Polly's usual exclamation when he wants something.) Going to the cage we found Polly standing by the cage door. In one of his feet he held the spool. As soon as we opened the door he pushed the spool out with such violence that it bounded away across the room. Then he ruffled up his feathers, climbed up on his perch, and called "Toast! Coffee!" It was a late hour for breakfast yet he seemed to enjoy it thoroughly.

Although this incident happened two years ago, Polly still dislikes spools. When one is placed in his cage he climbs up on his perch and refuses to come down until the spool is removed.

## Resolve

By HELEN MARING

I would live life fully;  
Life is like the soil,  
Giving crops to those who plough,  
Joy to those who toil.

Working brings us gladness;  
Idle hearts reap tears.  
Work and joy go hand in hand,  
Laughing at the years.



## Now Why?

By ETTA F. GILBERT

"Polly wants a cracker!"  
My parrot calls to me  
Whenever I come near him,—  
He's as smart as he can be.

But why can't Robin Redbreast,  
Away up in the tree,  
Speak just like Polly Parrot,  
Instead of "chir'up" and "chee"?



# THE BEACON CLUB

## The Editor's Post Box

Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

41 WREN ST.,  
WEST ROXBURY, MASS.

Dear Editor: I was very much surprised to see in today's *Beacon* the letters from Eleanor and Joyce Dawkins about their experiences at the Shoals. I was there when they were and enjoyed it very much. I had a room which looked over toward the lighthouse and every few seconds the red light would shine into our room.

You remember that you gave my name to Miss Gill to send me the address of some girl with whom I might correspond. She gave me the name of a girl in Leeds (England) with whom I have had a lovely time. We have written to each other telling about our schools and churches. I told her about my lovely week at the Shoals and she told me about her vacation.

I should like very much to correspond with a girl of my own age (fifteen) who lives in some other country.

Sincerely yours,

ALICE T. HUNTER.

34 HUBBARD ST.,  
BLOOMFIELD, CONN.

Dear Editor: I am eleven years old and go to the Unitarian church in Hartford, Conn. Our minister's name is Rev. Charles Graves. My teacher's name is Miss Graves. I would like to become a member of the Beacon Club. I like to do the puzzles in *The Beacon* and I may send some of my own sometime. I would like to correspond with someone. I am a stamp collector and have about 1,300 stamps.

Yours truly,

FRANK BARNES.

22 PLYMPTON ST.,  
WOBURN, MASS.

Dear Editor: I joined the Beacon Club about two years ago and proudly wore its pin until I lost it a short while ago. Will you please send me another?

I go to the Unitarian Church of Woburn. Our minister is Rev. H. A. Perdelwitz. My Sunday-school teacher is Mr. Harrington. There are five or six other boys in my class. I should like some boy 13 or 14 years old to correspond with me.

Sincerely,

HARRISON LEATHE, JR.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

## Book Notes

By ELSIE LUSTIG

TROUBADOUR TALES, by Evaleen Stein, is a book which both boys and girls will enjoy. There are four stories, three of which are French, the fourth, "The Lost Rune," is mostly about Finland. The time is the middle ages, and the tales are full of adventure and romance. I suppose most of you know that in those days there were many troubadours—both among the rich and the poor—men who wrote poetry and songs, then went around singing these in banquet halls, in castles, anywhere that they could get an audience. Such entertainments were common and popular particularly throughout France. The first story tells how Pierrot, a page, earned the favor of King Rene, and won a silver cup for cleverness in the Latin tongue. And how when Pierrot grew up, he himself became a famous troubadour. The second story tells about the legend of a lost poem of Finland, and how little Elsa restored it to her people. The third story tells of the adventures of Geoffrey, a peasant boy who lived in Normandy. He was a brave and loyal boy, and as a result of his courage became a page to King Louis of France. The last is a story of Provence. Felix tended sheep, but he longed to be a wood carver. His father did not encourage this, and only through the friendship of Lady Elinor did he finally become a famous carver.

OUR LITTLE FLORENTINE COUSIN OF LONG AGO, by Anna C. Winslow, is a new volume in the "Little Cousin Series." This is the story of Filippo, a boy of Firenze,—as Florence is called in Italian,—who lived in the 15th century. It is full of adventure and excitement. I think that those of you who are studying ancient history will find it full of interest. Filippo knew Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli and many other Florentines who have become famous through their works of art which can still be seen in many of the important museums and churches in Europe.

TROUBADOUR TALES, by Evaleen Stein. L. C. Page & Co., Boston. \$1.65.

OUR LITTLE FLORENTINE COUSIN OF LONG AGO, by Anna C. Winslow. L. C. Page Co., Boston. \$1.00.

## Puzzlers

### Hidden Books of the Bible

1. My father's Durham cows are the best herd in this part of the country.
2. My daughter, Jerusha, plays the banjo beautifully.
3. My favorite author is Kipling; Gene's is Shakespeare.
4. Thy index, O dusty book, bespeaks the dryness of thy contents.
5. Don't get in a rut. Have many interests.
6. I prefer to sit. It usually tires me to stand.

J. W. M.

### Twisted Bible Names

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. Otl     | 6. Omess    |
| 2. Mharaba | 7. Daam     |
| 3. Suesj   | 8. Aeni     |
| 4. Vee     | 9. Hoha     |
| 5. Bael    | 10. Nmoolos |

SHIRLEY MARTIN.

### Charade

My first is what makes my whole;  
My second's an enclosure;  
My whole's the name to a general given,  
As result of his composure.

J. W. M.

### Answers to Puzzles in No. 7

Twisted Names of Authors.—1. Lofting. 2. Longfellow. 3. Burgess. 4. Stockton. 5. Milne. 6. Whittier. 7. Field. 8. Emerson. 9. Hawthorne. 10. Bryant. 11. Lowell. 12. Stevenson. 13. Irving. 14. Cooper.

An Open Square.—MADAM

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D	D
A	A
MADAM	

What Am I?—The Postman.

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